

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A coating method, comprising:

conveying an object to be coated in a predetermined conveying direction;

dividing a coating surface of the object to be coated into a plural number of coating areas; and

performing coating with individual sprayer units reciprocating along said coating areas substantially parallel to the conveying direction of said object such that adjacent coating areas of said plural number of coating areas are respectively coated by a different one of the sprayer units, wherein

during the performing the coating of at least two of the adjacent coating areas in the conveying direction, when said sprayer units are reciprocating substantially parallel to said conveying direction of said object, positions of turning paths for reciprocation, located at a boundary between the adjacent coating areas such that the adjacent coating areas abut along the boundary, are sequentially shifted from a front side to a rear side in said conveying direction of said object, and the coating is performed while forming a coating trajectory of said turning paths like a series of steps such that each successive one of the turning paths of each respective one of the adjacent coating areas ~~on the front side of~~ the boundary extends further in a direction opposite to the conveying direction than each previous one of the turning paths of the respective one of the adjacent coating areas.

2. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein at a first parallel transit path of parallel transit paths for the reciprocation of said sprayer units being start positions of the coating trajectories in said individual coating areas, the coating is performed while moving said sprayer units from the front side to the rear side in said

conveying direction, and at a last parallel transit path being end positions of said coating trajectories in said individual coating areas, the coating is performed while moving said sprayer units from the front side to the rear side in said conveying direction.

3. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein parallel transit paths for the reciprocation of each of said sprayer units are aligned substantially linearly in said adjacent coating areas.

4. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating is performed in a manner such that positions of terminal ends of parallel transit paths in one direction for said reciprocation of said sprayer units and start ends of parallel transit paths in a return direction are shifted from the front side to the rear side in said conveying direction of said object.

5. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein the coating is performed in a manner such that paint is sprayed by said sprayer units at parallel transit paths and is turned off at said turning paths for said reciprocation during said reciprocation of said sprayer units.

6. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein during the performing the coating of the at least two adjacent coating areas, the coating is performed while forming the coating trajectory of the turning paths such that each successive one of the turning paths on the rear side of the boundary extends further away from the conveying direction than each previous one of the turning paths.

7. (Previously Presented): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein the turning paths on the front side of the boundary each link two parallel transit paths for the reciprocation of the sprayer units, the turning paths are sequentially shifted from the front side to the rear side in said conveying direction of said object, and the portion of each of the turning paths that links the two parallel transit paths is not perpendicular to the two parallel transit paths.

8. (Currently Amended): A coating method, comprising:

conveying an object to be coated in a predetermined conveying direction;

dividing a coating surface of the object to be coated into a plurality of coating areas;

and

performing coating with a first sprayer unit and a second sprayer unit each reciprocating along said coating areas substantially parallel to the conveying direction of said object such that adjacent coating areas of said coating areas are respectively coated by a different one of the sprayer units, wherein

during the performing the coating of at least two of the adjacent coating areas, positions of turning paths for reciprocation of the sprayers units are sequentially shifted from a front side to a rear side in said conveying direction of said object,

a coating trajectory of the turning paths for reciprocation of the first sprayer unit is formed such that each successive one of the turning paths on the rear side of a boundary of a first coating area extends further in a direction opposite to the conveying direction than each previous one of the turning paths, and

a coating trajectory of the turning paths for reciprocation of the second sprayer unit is formed such that each successive one of the turning paths on the front side of a boundary of a second coating area, which is adjacent to the first coating area, extends further in the

direction opposite to the conveying direction than each previous one of the turning paths, and the boundary of the first coating area abuts the boundary of the second coating area such that the adjacent coating areas abut along the boundary of the first coating area and the boundary of the second coating area.

9. (New): A coating method as defined in claim 1, wherein during the performing the coating of one of the adjacent coating areas in the conveying direction, the turning paths of the sprayer unit that is performing the coating do not cross the boundary between the adjacent coating area.

10. (New): A coating method as defined in claim 8, wherein during the performing the coating of the first coating area, the turning paths of the first sprayer unit do not cross the boundary of the second coating area.

11. (New): A coating method as defined in claim 8, wherein during the performing the coating of the second coating area, the turning paths of the second sprayer unit do not cross the boundary of the first coating area.